

10 March 1966

THE NATURE OF THE WAR IN SOUTH VIETNAM

It is obvious, just from a quick look at the press and television these days, that an invitation to speak on "The Nature of the War in South Vietnam" leaves me a bit field.

The nature of this war, it is apparent, is seen from entirely different viewpoints, for example, by the leaders of such nations as France, India, and Australia---or Cambodia and South Korea--or even the Soviet Union and Communist China.

The infantryman and the Commanding General have differing viewpoints. So do the reporter in Saigon and the Public Information Officer there---or in Washington. In other words, it's a hundred different kinds of war, depending on who you are and where you are.

Even in the intelligence business in Washington, we have to deal with a number of different approaches.

We have the responsibility, of course, of keeping track of the war as the enemy sees it, both in Hanoi, and in the rice paddies and the jungle trails of South Vietnam. If we are to keep abreast of the prospects for the South Vietnamese government, we must know how

We know that to the infantryman, running into a Viet Cong ambush, or taking part in a massive operation against an enemy who is no longer there, the war is a bloody, exhausting, and very highly personal thing.

But at the same time, particularly for this kind of fighting against a dodging, shifting, concealed enemy, with no fixed lines of battle, the war in South Vietnam is also in a very important way a war of statistics. We chart the casualties, the incidents, the weapons losses, the desertions, --- practically everything that can be reduced to a graph.

It may sound inhuman and unfeeling. We are also reminded frequently of Mark Twain's comment that "there are lies, damn lies, and statistics." But it is an essential view of the nature of this war, because it is one of the ways that we can tell whether we are winning or losing. It helps to pin-point enemy weaknesses and vulnerabilities. It also serves to alert us to weaknesses on our side that need correction. Finally, the statistics furnish some measure of answer to such misconceptions as the statement that this is a civil war among opposing factions of South Vietnamese, or that the majority of the people support the Viet Cong.

Fortunately, I have not been asked to confine myself to any one particular view of this war, so I am going to make use of a number of them.

Let me say first of all that it is a good-sized war.

On the allied side, there are at present:

215,000 Americans;
307,000 South Vietnamese regulars;
343,150 SVN paramilitary;
21,300 South Koreans, with another 20,000
or so about to be added;
1,500 Australians -- and they plan to
triple their contribution;
150 New Zealanders; and small

detachments from Nationalist China,
The Philippines,
Thailand, and
Iran.

Altogether, 31 nations of the Free World are providing assistance to South Vietnam, and 9 more have agreed to do so, but these eight -- the United States, South Korea, Australia, New Zealand, Nationalist China, The Philippines, Thailand, and Iran are the only ones who have sent military personnel.

Still, the allied manpower engaged in the war in Vietnam amounts to 890,000, and the number is increasing steadily. It is conceivable that by mid-year there will be one million men on the allied side.

On the enemy side, we have confirmed:

13,050 North Vietnamese army regulars;
59,250 combat troops and
17,000 support troops in the Viet Cong main force;
103,600 irregulars --- local guerrillas.

192,900 confirmed.

- 39,200 "armed political cadres"--the men who carry on terrorism, indoctrination, propaganda, Communist administration, tax collecting.

We also carry another

4,000 North Vietnamese
1,600 Viet Cong main force, and
16,400 irregulars as "probable" or "possible,"
but not yet confirmed.

255,100 men -- possibly more -- in 129 battalions
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make up the enemy total. -3-

If we accept the units which are "probably" or "possibly" in South Vietnam on the enemy side, there are then 890,000 of our men arrayed against 255,100 of theirs---and advantage of just a shade over three-and-a-half to one

The text books say that it may take an advantage of ten to one to suppress and eliminate a guerrilla insurgency.

Nevertheless, the war is running in our favor.

It has been since the middle of 1965.

We hold the initiative. We are inflicting casualties on the enemy at by far the highest rate of the war. We have been keeping the Viet Cong main force units off balance and on the run. The enemy is maintaining his rate of "incidents," if you include sabotage, propaganda, terrorism, and small raids, but the number of

attacks launched by the enemy, by and large, is going down.

1962	1963	1964	1965
5465	4490	1833	685

Where he concentrates his forces for a major operation, he is either hit by our air support, or becomes the target for one of the "search-and-destroy" operations which we are mounting in increasing strength, and with increasing frequency.

If you compare three charts for 1965 -- the number of enemy attacks, the comparative weapons losses on each side, and the comparative personnel losses on each side, a significant pattern emerges.

All three of these graphs show a peak in February, a peak in June, and a peak in November.

In February, the peak in Viet Cong attacks was accompanied by almost identical peaks in government weapons losses and government casualties.

In June, another Viet Cong offensive flurry was again accompanied by an increase in government weapons losses, but this time the casualties on the Viet Cong side rose just as steeply as those on the government side.

In November, all of the peaks were at the expense of the Viet Cong. Their attacks in one week not only cost them more than 1,000 weapons, but their most severe casualty week of the war up to that point---nearly 2,500 killed or captured in action.

Let me go into a little detail on the workings of some of these statistics. It gives some insight into the nature of the war.

The ancient Romans counted the weapons captured from the enemy when they flung them at the feet of their emperor. Our concern with weapons losses is considerably more meaningful.

We keep track of government weapons losses, because originally this was the way the enemy obtained most of his weapons. It helped us to estimate how large a force the enemy could arm.

Today, more and more of the Viet Cong main force units are armed with a family of 7.62-millimeter weapons---approximately 30-caliber, that is---of Soviet design----most of them manufactured in Communist China. The weapons are good weapons for close combat in the jungle. They have lower muzzle velocities than ours, but this has little effect on accuracy at ranges of 100 and 200 yards---and the Viet Cong for the past year have been trying to fight close in, so that it is hard to bring our superior artillery and our air support to bear.

The 7.62 weapons -- a light machinegun, a semi-automatic rifle, and a machine-pistol -- have high rates of fire. They also have one other advantage: they all use the identical cartridge, which is important when all the ammunition has to be portered in over mountain trails, and distributed the same way.

But whether the Viet Cong weapons were seized from government troops, or are now brought in from North Vietnam and China, one fact remains constant--the Viet Cong are trained to hang onto their weapons, and to retrieve the weapons of those who are killed.

That means that when the Viet Cong have heavy weapons losses---particularly when they lose crew-served weapons---it is a healthy sign that they have been badly beaten, and have been driven from the battlefield before they could collect the guns----possibly even wiped out.

In my comparison of the three charts, I referred to "personnel losses" on both sides. This is not the same as "casualties"--for a good reason.

We compare the friendly Killed in Action and Missing in Action with the enemy Killed in Action and Prisoners. We keep track of friendly forces Wounded in Action, but we don't use this in comparisons, because we have no reliable figures on enemy wounded.

As a matter of fact, we have no reliable figures on the total enemy Killed in Action. For the past four years, we have included enemy KIA in our statistics only when US personnel actually counted the bodies. In other words, we do not include those killed by air strikes or artillery in areas near the battlefield which may not be in our hands after the fighting is finished. We get estimates from the pilots, but we do not include them. We can't be sure.

We also know that the Viet Cong are almost fanatical about carrying away, or at least concealing, the bodies of their dead if it is at all possible. In one case last fall, our Marines on a major offensive near Chu Lai were puzzled at the lack of enemy casualties after a series of sharp engagements. A South Vietnamese force, mopping up behind the Marines, noticed a long trench which appeared to have been caved in. The South Vietnamese dug it out, and found the bodies of 200 Viet Cong.

As a result, we can be fairly certain that the enemy is losing more men than we show in our statistics. These statistics, based on a positive body count, show that at least 93,954 Viet Cong (or North Vietnamese PAVN) have been killed in the past four years. There were 21,158 enemy KIA in 1962, 20,575 in 1963, 16,785 in 1964. The Viet Cong losses were steady--if anything, declining a bit. But in 1965 the enemy lost 35,436 KIA, double the number for 1964, as major allied forces began their search-and-destroy operations. For the last half of 1965, the kill rate was about 15,000 per quarter, and in just the first seven weeks of 1966, we counted 6,856 Viet Cong bodies.

MACV, General Westmoreland's command in Saigon, estimates that the Viet Cong may be able to muster some 35,000 replacements a year within South Vietnam. That means that if this were a war completely confined to South Vietnam, at the present kill rate the enemy manpower would now be going steadily downhill. But the Communists, even after losing more than 100,000 men, still have 255,000 in the field. The cause is steady, growing infiltration from North Vietnam.

On infiltration, too, some explanation of our statistics may help to explain the nature of this war. I referred a little while confirmed, "probable," and "possible" enemy units in South Vietnam. Experience has shown that these classifications are largely a matter

4 yrs
93,954

1966
6,856

93,954
6,856
100,810
'62-'66

of the passage of time. A unit which is originally carried as "possible" on the basis of tenuous evidence becomes "probable" as the evidence increases, and finally "confirmed" when we can establish its presence by two or more sources -- documents, prisoners, or defectors. We have found, for example, that some battalions of the North Vietnamese army crossed into South Vietnam as much as three to six months before they made their way into the "confirmed" category. That is why our figures on the number of enemy combat troops remains an approximation--and on the low side at that. It also explains why we are continuously revising and increasing our figures on the total infiltration from North Vietnam.

The groundwork for this infiltration was laid in 1954 when 100,000 South Vietnamese--80,000 of them Viet Minh troops--elected to re-group north of the demarcation line and settle in North Vietnam at the time when the country was divided.

These men formed the original manpower pool for the infiltration of specialists and trained cadres from North Vietnam to the Viet Cong in the South.

MACV's figures for infiltration, year by year, show

1,800 confirmed and 2,782 probable in 1959-1960	
4,118	2,177 1961
5,362	7,495 1962
4,726	3,180 1963
9,316	3,108 1964, for a cumulative
25,322 confirmed and 18,742 probable--a total of	

44,064 men probably infiltrated through 1964. Now it is interesting that even before our figures reached this total, we had estimated that with the passage of 10 years, by 1964 there were probably 45,000 men left out of those original 100,000 who had gone north, who would still be fit for guerrilla life. That would suggest that the original manpower pool was exhausted at the end of 1964. Bearing this out, almost all of the infiltrates we have identified since the beginning of 1965 have been northerners by birth and by home.

In 1965, the infiltration confirmed so far amounts to 13,953 men, with another 5,165 probable. We believe that when all the evidence is in, the total for 1965 will be at least 24,000 men. From all of our various types of intelligence information, we believe that the infiltration routes from North Vietnam, through the last months of 1965 and now, are sending about 4,500 men a month into South Vietnam.

They used to come as cadres for the Viet Cong units. For the past year, they have been coming in as battalions and regiments of North Vietnamese regulars--the PAVN, or People's Army of Viet-Nam.

This 4,500 a month -- 54,000 a year -- is probably just about the maximum effort that North Vietnam can now sustain in training and covert infiltration. But if the Viet Cong can raise 35,000 replacements in the South, and then infiltrate 54,000 from the North, that means we must put some 90,000 out of action in the course of a year just to hold our own.

I said earlier that the war in South Vietnam is a sizable war. It is also a frustrating war.

The enemy has worked his way up from squad actions to company, battalion, regimental, and recently even multi-regimental actions. But increasingly, since U.S. combat troops and tactical aircraft were committed to action, the Viet Cong formations want to fight at times and places of their own choosing.

Intelligence, locating the enemy formations, is all-important to our operations in South Vietnam. We are attempting to find the enemy concentrations, pin them down, and force them to action. When we can do this, the results are dramatic--for instance, in Operation WHITE WING, in coastal Binh Dinh Province. This ground sweep, now six weeks old, involves five U.S., seven South Vietnamese, and one South Korean battalion. It has killed or captured 2,542 Viet Cong, apprehended another 2,200 suspects, and taken 379 weapons, 66 of them crew-served, at a cost of 377 killed. This operation

started with a "lunge into nothing," but the search was pressed until the Viet Cong concentrations we knew were in the area could no longer hide.

On other occasions, however, major allied forces sweep through an area which we know is crawling with Viet Cong---and there is no battle. These even happens in the long-established Viet Cong stronghold north of Saigon--"War Zone D." We have found training camps, hospital sites, rice supplies, weapons caches, and crude ordnance factories. We have found fresh tracks, and warm food on the table---and plenty of booby traps. But in many of these cases, the enemy casualties add up to few or none.

This is the story, in particular, of the small-unit operations, from company-size on down, which are important to pacification of South Vietnam. The total of these actions ran into the thousands practically every week last year---but on the average, less than a half of one percent made contact with the enemy. The contact usually took place when the enemy thought he had the edge.

Killing the enemy is one way to suppress the insurgency. Another way is to cut off the supplies from outside the country, because he must at least bring in ammunition for these weapons made in China. As we seize more of his food depots, and provide security for the rice harvest, he may have to bring in food. He needs some pharmaceuticals, some communications supplies.

But like the hunt for the elusive enemy main forces, this too can be frustrating.

There are trained teams of anti-Communist mountain tribesmen in Laos, watching the road networks that make up the Ho Chi Minh trail. They tell us that during the current dry season, there are enough trucks rolling south from North Vietnam into the Laotian panhandle to carry 70 to 90 tons of supplies a day. Of this, we calculate that 50 to 70 tons a day comes out the southern end of the Ho Chi Minh trail into South Vietnam.

Now, we have estimated that the 110 enemy main force battalions in South Vietnam--fighting a battalion action on the average of about once every 35 days as they did last year--can get by on 12 tons a day--but there are probably 50 to 70 tons coming in.

If the 110 battalions were increased to 155, and fought once every three days--in other words, about half again as many troops fighting 10 times as often--we estimate that they would need perhaps 165 to 170 tons a day--and the capacity of the Laotian road network in the dry season is estimated at about 400 tons a day.

Block the mountains, strafe the trucks, bomb the roads, the ports, the railines in Laos and in North Vietnam---

and you are left with the frustrating probability that an army of coolies, swarming like ants down the hidden jungle trails, could still bring in the necessary 12 tons a day on their backs.

This war in South Vietnam is at the same time a war of many fronts, and of no fronts. We have become accustomed, in two World Wars and even in Korea, of thinking of front lines drawn neatly across battle maps. This is not that kind of a war. The guerrilla cuts through and across the lines, and makes them meaningless.

At our bases, we may speak of "perimeters," and establish lines of sentries and outposts to provide security for our installations. Even this has little meaning, given the Vietnamese terrain and the enemy's guerrilla tactics. You just can't clear all the vegetation--and for that matter, all of the native villages--far enough away from an air base, or an oil depot, or a supply dump, to ensure that a handful of guerrillas, operating at night, cannot manhandle a 120-millimeter mortar within range and fire 20 or 30 rounds into the base before there is time to react.

We even have to take special measures to protect shipping in the main channel of the Saigon River, loading in from the ocean to the capital's port,

because a few guerrillas have been hiding in the dense vegetation along the swampy river banks, and shooting machineguns or recoilless rifles at the river traffic, trying to set some of the small oil tankers afire or to sink a smaller ship in such a position as to block the channel.

If there is no neat front line, this is nevertheless a many-sided war. Even on the military side, there are many facets.

We concentrate on a strategy of search-and-destroy, designed to find the enemy main forces, bring them to bay, and wipe them out. It is, in an entirely new sense from that of World War II, a war of movement, in which our new "air-mobile" First Cavalry Division, swooping down suddenly in helicopters to attack an enemy concentration, is proving out a new concept in warfare.

But there are also towns, and bases, and military and economic facilities, and lines of communication, which are essential to the defense of South Vietnam. The guerrillas have no such areas which they must hold at all costs. The guerrillas can just fade away into the dark and fight another day. The allied forces have to defend these places if they are going to restore and maintain any kind of a normal life in South Vietnam. Ultimately, if we propose to have a free, secure and viable South Vietnam, entire areas

must be occupied with a protective screen of troops while civil administration is restored, stay-behind clandestine guerrilla cells rooted out, and the public is given confidence that the central government can protect them and help them to meet their aspirations.

This takes a lot of troops---and it may be that for this town, or that fortified hamlet, only a company of the paramilitary militia forces can be spared. Perhaps some hamlets may find that the South Vietnamese government can only give them guns, help them build fortifications, and tell them to raise and maintain their own defense force.

And then the paramilitary forces, manning these watch-towers and forts and fortified hamlets, wait through the night, and wonder---whether it is their turn tonight; whether the Viet Cong, maneuvering out there in the swamps or the jungle, are massing a company, a battalion, or a regiment against them; whether they will be able to get off a radioed call for help when the attack comes, and how long it will take the South Vietnamese Army or the Americans to come to the rescue.

It may sound like the script of a Grade B movie, but these are real and sometimes deadly questions.

They are questions which decide whether we are winning or losing the war to bring security to the people. A year ago, the reporting from Vietnam was filled with all-too-frequent accounts of a village overrun by an enemy force of unknown size, with skimpy statistics: Popular Forces, 14 killed, 3 wounded, 85 missing; weapons lost, 102. Today, the morning's intelligence bulletin much more frequently describes an incident in which there was no militiaman at a crucial post who turned out to be a Viet Cong agent and let the guerrillas break in. The radio call did get through, and aircraft dropped enough flares to let the defenders gun down the Viet Cong. And toward morning, like the Cavalry in that Grade B movie, the regular forces arrived in enough strength to relieve the town, and to pursue the enemy main force back into the jungle.

Where we do not win this kind of a military battle, or at least keep up the fight, we leave the Vietnamese people open to an even grimmer side of this many-sided war, for which "political action" is indeed a mild term. The more accurate term is terrorism.

Guerrilla warfare at the grass roots level is essentially political warfare. Mao Tse-tung has said that the guerrillas are fish, and the people of a nation are the ocean in which the fish swim. In less fanciful

language, as long as insurgents are operating as guerrillas, not as an army fighting major battles, the insurgents for survival must have an environment in which they can count on the cooperation of the people.

There are two ways to get that cooperation-- by winning the support and sympathy of the people, or by terrorizing them into abject fear of their lives.

I think one of the most revealing insights into the nature of the war in South Vietnam is the fact that more and more, the Viet Cong are finding it necessary to terrorize the South Vietnamese people, because they do not have their sympathy or support.

Hundreds of South Vietnamese villages might be said to be in "Indian country"---under nominal government administration by day at least, but still not secured from Viet Cong penetration.

There may even be an underground Communist administration in the village side-by-side with the officials responsible to Saigon. The Communist officials levy taxes in money and in kind; they draft young men for the guerrilla forces, and the public at large to haul supplies, dig trenches, or evacuate the wounded. And the people will follow orders, if they suspect that a proportion of their fellow-villagers are guerrillas by night, and the regular village chief is not backed up

by adequate security forces.

Where there is not already a strong Communist underground in the village, the people already know from past experience, or from what has happened in some neighboring district, that a squad of armed guerrillas may suddenly appear in the village at dusk and take over. The people of the village will be ordered to assemble, possibly by torchlight if there are no government forces nearby. The village chief is dragged from his hut with his family, and held at gun-point while the Communist political functionary leading the guerrillas harangues the assembly with propaganda for the "National Liberation Front," and warns the people not to oppose it. What was formerly indoctrination has now given way largely to outright intimidation.

To underline the message, local officials are often killed or kidnaped---and villagers have reported cases where the village chief was forced to watch the torture or murder of his family before he himself was finally put to death.

The villagers not only have to pay taxes and provide rice for the guerrilla raiders--they also in effect give hostages against any future opposition to the Viet Cong. A portion of them--if not the entire population--may be impressed into service, either as recruits or as labor gangs, before the guerrillas withdraw. Often they are

first made to destroy any fortifications which have been built for the village.

Under these circumstances, South Vietnam is not, at present, a healthy area for taking door-to-door Gallup Polls. We cannot get a monthly reading on the political sympathies of the population. As a matter of fact, many of them for generations have related only to the local village chief, or possibly the district government. They were for or against their local chiefs, and had no concept of nationalism, central government, or ideologies of any type.

But I submit that if the Vietnamese people were in sympathy with the Viet Cong, it would not be necessary or sensible for the Viet Cong to mortar refugee camps. It would not be necessary or sensible for the Viet Cong to terrorize villages and assassinate the local head men. And it would not be feasible for the Government to induce the "rallying"--as they call it, of thousands of people from the Viet Cong side to the safety of government reception centers.

In 1963, the Viet Cong killed 515 local government officials, and 1,588 other civilians, and kidnaped a total of 7,262. In 1964 they killed 436 officials and 1,359 civilians, kidnaped 1,131 officials and 8,423 civilians. Last year, they killed 230 and kidnaped 329 local officials, and killed 1,665 civilians and kidnaped 11,451 more. Added up, it means that in three years the Viet Cong had to assassinate or remove nearly 35,000 people at the grass roots--hardly a sign that they have the sympathy of any substantial portion of the population.

As for the ralliers, the government has a program called "Chieu Hoi," or "Open Arms." It has suffered from time to time from poor administration, and it has been proven that it cannot offer an iron-clad guarantee of safety to those who leave the Viet Cong areas and join the government side---but it drew a total of 14,465 in 1964, and three times as many--42,552--in 1965. Even more significantly, these figures included 1,903 Viet Cong military personnel in 1964, and last year there were five times as many--9,472. There were also a number of Viet Cong political functionaries, who should have been the most fanatical and dedicated of the lot.

Finally, there is the matter of elections. It appears to surprise some people to hear that there have been elections in South Vietnam. Provincial councils were elected in every Province of South Vietnam and the major towns last May, and they were remarkably free, because a number of candidates were elected who were opposed to the Saigon regime, without being pro-Communist.

Now, ever since the insurgency began in South Vietnam in 1959, the Viet Cong have done their best to disrupt elections, so that the South Vietnamese government would have difficulty in claiming or showing a base of popular support. Communist terrorism has been aimed at intimidating voters, killing election officials, and destroying the ballots. Admittedly, there were areas where the elections could not be held last May, but there was some voting in every province.

There are about 17 million South Vietnamese---there is no accurate census. Altogether there were an estimated 7 million eligible voters, based on the number of identity cards in existence. Out of the 7 million, 4,900,000 registered to vote, and just under 3,500,000 managed to cast their votes. A turn-out of 71% of the registered voters compares favorably with our performance here in the United States, where there is little gun-fire on the way to the polls. This may certainly be taken as an indication that the South

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Vietnamese people, whether or not they support the regime of the moment in Saigon, have in no way demonstrated that they are in sympathy with the Viet Cong, who tried to prevent the elections.

In addition to the military war of big battles, quick raids, and bloody ambushes, and the political war with its propaganda and terrorism, of course, there is an economic war in South Vietnam.

The Viet Cong devote a major effort to disrupting the communications of the country. by sabotage or by actual road-blocks. Only a few isolated stretches of the main national railroad are open to traffic---and on these stretches trains are often blown up, just as busses are mined on the highways. (It is a measure of Viet Cong terrorism that the mines on the highway are often not pressure mines, but the type which are set off by wires running to a nearby guerrilla observation post. They could have blown up a military vehicle--but instead they blow up busloads and trainloads of civilians.) Some of the main highways of the country can be traveled only in military convoy.

This has a military purpose, of course, but it also hamstring the country's economy, and helps prevent the development of a sense of national unity. It leaves entire provinces and districts isolated, and on their own.

There have been occasions in the past when-- because of the disruption of rail lines and highways, South Vietnam has been unable to move enough of cargo to support the provinces north of Saigon by coastal shipping, and has had to ask for air lift.

The problem is complicated by the presence in the northern coastal cities of nearly 800,000 refugees---South Vietnamese peasants who in many cases have in effect "voted against the Viet Cong with their feet" by abandoning their hinterland villages for the safety of the larger urban centers.

Both sides are waging an economic war for the rice harvest. South Vietnam normally exports large quantities of rice; this year, we have to ship rice in for domestic consumption. We have staged some major and successful military operations to enable the peasants in the principal rice-growing areas to harvest the crop in safety and get it into government hands; in Viet Cong territory, the Viet Cong taxes in some districts run as high as 60 percent of the crop. And as I have already mentioned, some of our military sweeps are depriving the Viet Cong of substantial stores of rice and other foods, a favorable development which we hope will put added strain on their logistics.

The war in South Vietnam today is military, political, and economic, but it is not a civil war. It is not a war of the South Vietnamese people against some unpopular

regime in Saigon. It is not civil, and it is not even internal, because not only a good share of the enemy troops and the enemy weapons, but even the enemy orders come from North Vietnam.

Le Duan, the number two man in the Communist Party of North Vietnam, in September 1960 made a speech to the Third Party Congress in Hanoi in which he called for a "broad united front" to be formed in South Vietnam. Three months later, the so-called "National Front for the Liberation of South Vietnam" sprang into being in South Vietnam, about as spontaneously as a Nazi parade in Nuremberg in the 30's. The manifesto of the Liberation Front bore a remarkable similarity to Le Duan's speech before the party congress, and used his words in describing its tasks and goals. In case there are some who argue that this could be a coincidence, we have captured directives since that time from Hanoi on how the so-called Liberation Front is to operate

To summarize, then, on the nature of this war in Vietnam which is a growing preoccupation with us.

It is an externally-supported insurgency, in effect, a Vietnamese Communist aggression against South Vietnam, not a civil war being waged by the people of South Vietnam against their government. It is increasingly a massive war, a costly and frustrating one, and it is going to be a difficult war to win, with no easy answers.

But I want to come back full circle to my starting point: we reached a turning point last year, and began winning the war, and we are winning today. It was at least the end of a miserable beginning, and if the end is not in sight, we are at least on our way there.

"30"